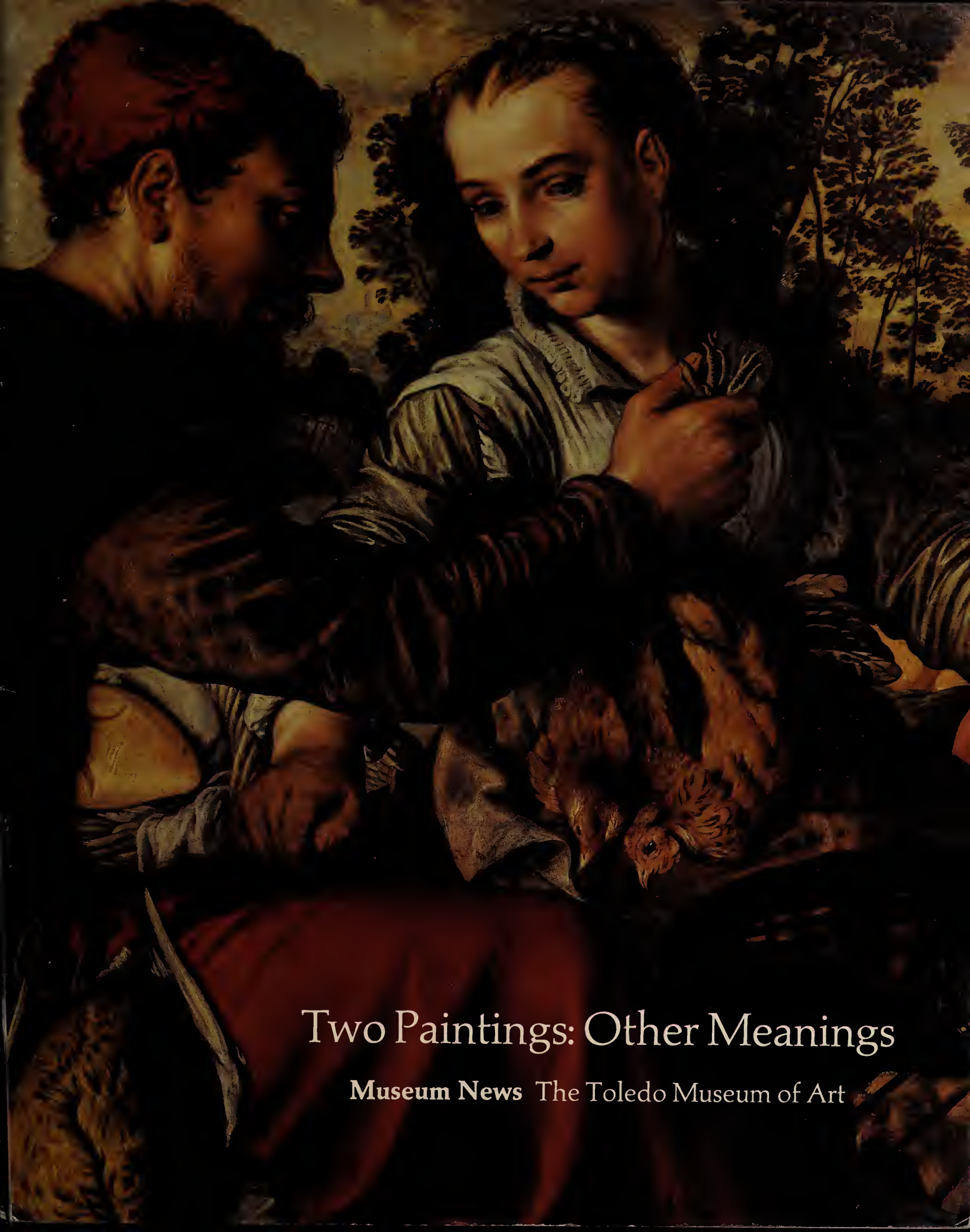

Two Paintings: Other Meanings

Museum News The Toledo Museum of Art

TWO PAINTINGS: OTHER MEANINGS

A fascinating development of recent years in the study of Renaissance and later painting in Northern Europe—especially in Holland and Flanders—is the increasing realization that subjects which have long been accepted as straightforward realism often have meanings which, though long forgotten, were well understood at the time they were painted.

In this issue, the subjects of two paintings recently acquired by the Museum are discussed by specialists in their respective fields. Burr Wallen, Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has written on the superb painting, *Poultry Sellers*, by the sixteenth century Antwerp artist, Joachim Beuckelaer, a contemporary of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and a founder of Northern still life painting. Beuckelaer's pictures of this quality are exceedingly rare outside older Continental European collections. Professor Wallen's article explains the drama behind this theme, whose monumental, vivid treatment by Beuckelaer shows why his work was admired by later artists such as Rubens and the painters of his generation.

Walter A. Liedtke, Assistant Professor of Art History at The Ohio State University, has published several articles on the architectural painting of seventeenth century Holland, and has recently completed a book on architectural painting in Delft. He places the Museum's church interior by Hendrik van Vliet in the context of its time and place, and shows how this subject contains patriotic, religious and moral implications.

These pictures broaden a collection of Flemish and Dutch paintings widely regarded as a strength of this Museum. The Beuckelaer provides a link heretofore missing in our collection between early sixteenth century art and the great flowering of painting which took place in the Low Countries after 1600, while the van Vliet is an admirable example of one of the specialized subjects which the Dutch developed so highly.

Roger Mandle, Director

Cover: Detail, Joachim Beuckelaer, *Poultry Sellers*, 1564 (see Figure 2).

Museum News The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio
Volume 21, Number 2, 1979

Joachim Beuckelaer's *Poultry Sellers*

The paintings of the Flemish artist Joachim Beuckelaer (c. 1530-c. 1573), like those of his uncle and teacher Pieter Aertsen (1508-1575), are justly admired for their lively compositions of robust peasants amid lush settings of fruits and vegetables, plump fowl and meaty cuts of beef and pork (fig. 1). Vigorously naturalistic, these large-scale panel paintings must have been very appealing to the prosperous burghers of Renaissance Antwerp, a flourishing port with a cosmopolitan population of merchants and tradespeople, for there are numerous references to works by both artists in late sixteenth and seventeenth century inventories. The accent on realistic details of animals and foodstuffs by Aertsen and Beuckelaer contributed to the development of still-life painting as a subject in its own right in Flemish and Dutch Baroque art. Rembrandt's famed painting of the carcass of an ox of 1655 at the Louvre has a precedent in Beuckelaer's *Slaughtered Pig* of 1563 at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne. Frans Snyders, Jan Fyt, Jan Davidsz de Heem and a host of later masters of the art of still-life—even the

Figure 1. Joachim Beuckelaer, *Market Scene*, 1564. Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.

Figure 2. Joachim Beuckelaer, *Poultry Sellers*, 1564.
Oil on panel, 55 x 43⅛ in. (139.7 x 109.7 cm). The Toledo Museum of Art, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey. 78.57.

revolutionary Italian, Caravaggio—owe a debt to this pair of sixteenth century Antwerp painters, who advanced the illusionistic representation of the natural world by a notable step.

The Toledo Museum of Art has recently acquired an outstanding work by Joachim Beuckelaer depicting an open air market with three farmers surrounded by an assortment of colorful produce (fig. 2). Dated 1564 on the keg of milk in the foreground, and signed on the heel of the man's shoe with the artist's characteristic "IB" monogram, this previously unpublished painting is a major addition to the Museum's collection of Northern European painting, and is one of very few pictures by Beuckelaer in America. The remarkable degree of preservation attests to the durability of painting with rich glazes of oil on a prepared wooden panel, a technique that had a long tradition in Netherlandish art and was especially cultivated in the Antwerp workshops. The large figures, pressed close to the surface of the picture in a tightly-woven Mannerist composition, hark back to the heroic beings depicted by Michelangelo on the Sistine Ceiling, avidly studied by younger Netherlandish artists. Beuckelaer employed a warm palette charged with ruddy autumnal shades. Brick-red, russet, terracotta and amber hues are highlighted by golden tones and set off against subdued greys and greens. Special attention is paid to the life-like modelling of the features. The complexions of the three subjects glow with the healthy coloration of rustic life. The textures and colors of fabrics, the plumage of the fowl, and the variety of intricate wicker baskets, sturdy wooden barrels and earthenware jugs are convincingly represented. According to the early historian of Dutch and Flemish painting, Carel van Mander, Beuckelaer had considerable difficulty mastering realism when he was a student in his uncle's atelier. By 1564, the date of the Toledo panel, he had certainly overcome any youthful deficiencies and had arrived at a mature level of representation of the natural world.

Especially remarkable is the depiction of poultry, which forms a major center of interest. The birds, grouped by pairs in a triangular arrangement across the panel, are evidently typical domestic fowl of the artist's day. A white rooster with a prominent red crest and wattles stands alertly in a cage beside a tawny hen. The rooster is akin to the American White Leghorn or the Spanish White Minorca, though those varieties are all white and do not have the black underfeathers and red touches on the wings of the species in the

painting. Innumerable varieties of chickens have been bred over the centuries, and it is likely that these are types common in the Lowlands at this time. The plump ducks in the basket at the left can be identified with certainty (fig. 3). They are male and female Rouen ducks, a domesticated waterfowl almost exactly like the wild Mallard of North America, except that it is thicker and heavier in build. Although this duck originated in the northern French city of Rouen, it was undoubtedly also raised in the Southern Provinces of the Netherlands. The drake's head shows the characteristic dark green color extending down the neck to a white collar. Its long, broad bill is clear yellow, in contrast to the female, whose bill is orange and more delicately shaped. The head and body of the latter are entirely brown, with the typical dark markings of the female.

The pair of fowl held up by the man in the center could well be another variety of chicken, though the prominent ruff, dark wings and patterned tailfeathers of the male resemble those of a game bird such as ruffed grouse. Perhaps further research into the history of ornithology will turn up the right family. Judging from the underbelly, these birds were good flyers. It is possible Beuckelaer intended a symbolic correspondence with the element of air, commonly associated with flight. The ducks would thus be linked with water, while the rooster and hen, as "dust-scatterers," were naturally related to the earth. This sort of associative thinking was very popular in the Renaissance, especially in Netherlandish art, which had a long tradition of hidden or disguised symbolism.

Sixteenth century ornithological treatises combine direct observation of birds and their habits with a host of legends, folktales and moralizing commentaries drawn mainly from ancient and medieval authorities. Several works on birds appeared in the 1540s and 1550s that could have been known to Beuckelaer, including an unfinished treatise by a Dutch doctor, Gybertus Longolius (*Dialogus de Avibus*, Cologne, 1544) and the comprehensive study by Conrad Gesner, *De avium natura* (Zurich, 1555), which formed the third part of his history of animals. The Netherlander Longolius criticizes the lack of scientific accuracy among earlier bird writers, who relied chiefly on "fiction and the testimony of poets." The proper objective of the ornithologist, he asserts, is the definition of the individual species, a task necessitating careful observation and comparison. Beuckelaer's beautifully realistic rendering of fowl in the Toledo panel reflects a parallel Renaissance concern with scientific accuracy and the exploration of the natural world.

We should not rule out the possibility, however, that the *Poultry Sellers* contains allusions to the vast bird lore which had accumulated over the centuries, and made widely available through publications such as these. Beuckelaer's great Flemish contemporary, Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525-1569), made extensive use of proverbs, legends and folktales in his paintings, which satirized the foibles of mankind in unforgettable fashion. A fascinating treatise on domestic fowl published at Bologna in 1600 by the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi, now available in an English translation, provides a good source for folklore about chickens. The rooster was renowned for its insatiable sexual appetite, while the egglaying hen symbolized unrestrained fertility. Research into Netherlandish word usage has revealed that the word *vogel*, or bird, possessed a rather blatant connotation in the sixteenth century. The bird-seller, like the man depicted in the painting, was often described as a lecher, and the gesture of holding up a pair of dead fowl to the young woman can be considered an erotic overture (fig. 4). A painting of *Christ and the Adulteress* of 1559 by Beuckelaer's teacher, Pieter Aertsen, (Frankfurt, Staedelsches Kunstinstitut) shows in the foreground a seedy-looking bird catcher in a similar red fur hat who ogles an attractive young pottery seller, her hand resting suggestively in the mouth of an earthenware jug. Sexual symbolism may be similarly expressed by the gesture of the pretty young woman in the center of the Toledo panel, whose left hand is extended towards the round opening of the wicker cage containing the rooster and hen.

Thus, this seemingly innocuous subject probably masks a satire of the sins of the flesh, one of the most popular secular themes of Northern Renaissance art. The rooster with his many wives and insatiable libido was a typical symbol of the unfaithful husband. The older woman at the right who looks away with a despondent expression can be identified as the bird-seller's rejected spouse. Gritting her teeth and furiously clenching her fist, she exhibits the vice of Envy, frequently personified by an anguished female figure ignored by a nearby couple conversing or embracing.

Figure 3. Detail of figure 2.

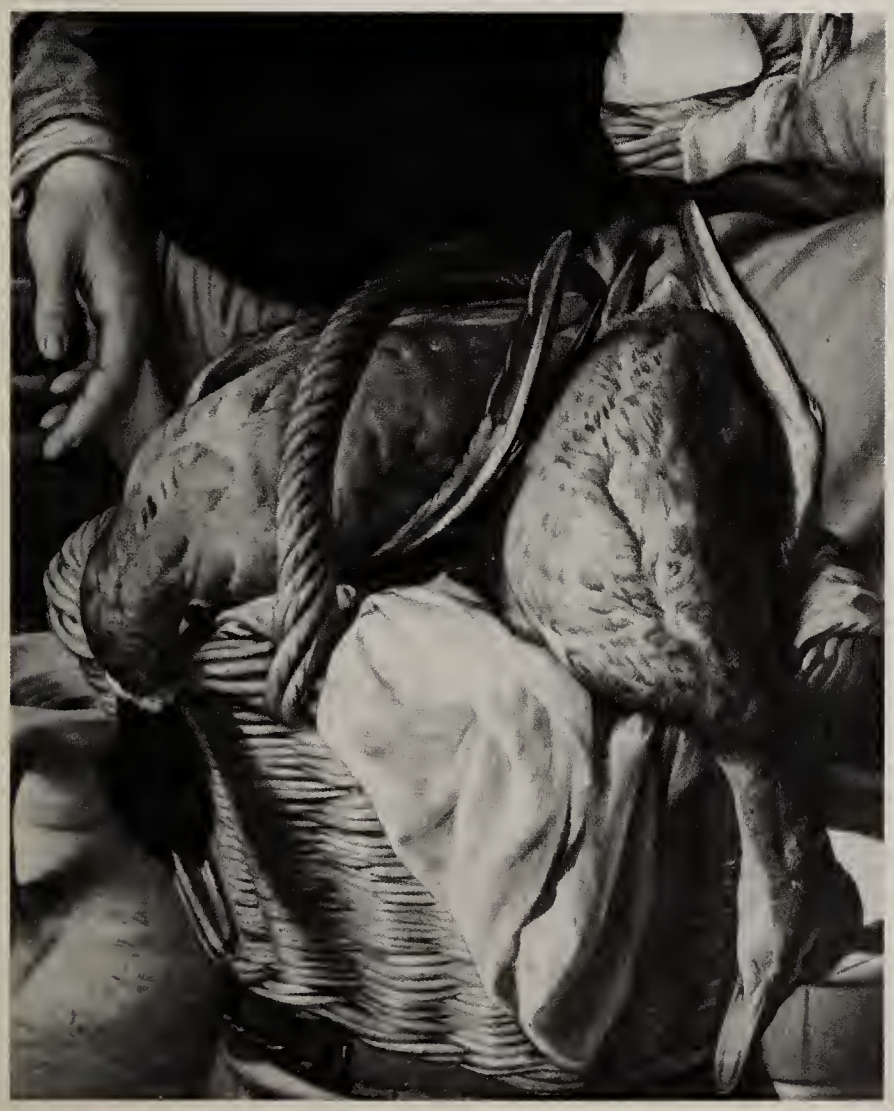

Figure 4. Detail of figure 2.

Figure 5. Joachim Beuckelaer, *Ecce Homo with a Market Scene*, 1561. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum.

Figure 6. Detail of figure 5.

Besides expressing lustfulness, the rooster was also regarded as an emblem of jealousy due to its feisty, vigilant temperament. An earlier work by Beuckelaer dated 1561 pictures a similar trio of market people in the foreground of an *Ecce Homo* scene (figs. 5 and 6). Here the man leers at a buxom young maiden, while in front there is a dejected middle-aged matron, again probably the jealous wife. A reference to adultery would not be inappropriate to an *Ecce Homo*, for it represents the denial of the holy sacrament of matrimony, just as Christ was denied and mocked by the people.

It was fairly common for Antwerp painters of the time to introduce genre figures into religious scenes as illustrations of sinful relations among unredeemed humanity. These worldly situations were meant to inspire the viewer to give up the foolish life of the senses in favor of Christian virtues of love and charity. Even when there is no religious theme, as in the Toledo panel, a didactic moralizing purpose is usually intended. To Beuckelaer's audience, the foodstuffs depicted in the painting would call to mind familiar biblical passages that reinforce the hidden message. Milk and cheese were, for the unfortunate Job, parables of man's frail earthly condition in his memorable appeal to God: "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay. And wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?" (Job 10:9-10). The redemption of the fallen human soul was imaged in the Psalms and Proverbs in terms of fowl liberated from traps set by a wily birdcatcher (the Devil): "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler . . ." (Psalms 91:2-3). "Deliver thyself like a roe from the hand of the hunter, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler." (Proverbs 6:5). The vigilant rooster was, furthermore, a mystical emblem of Christian alertness to the dangers of sinning. This is expressed by the patristic writer St. Gregory in his commentary on Job 38:36, a passage quoted by Aldrovandi in his treatise on chickens: "Be vigilant, ye just men, and do not sin." In the New Testament, the denial of Christ by St. Peter was forecast by the crowing of the cock.

Painted in a time of religious fervor and anxiety, the Toledo Beuckelaer expresses an ambivalent attitude towards the beauty of nature and everyday life. André Chastel has aptly termed the Mannerist era of the sixteenth century an age of crisis. Art itself came under attack by Calvinist agitators bent on removing any hint of idolatry from Christian worship. In 1566, just two years after the Toledo painting was done, a wave of fanatics invaded the churches of the Lowlands and destroyed numerous masterpieces in a spate of iconclasm. According to van Mander, Beuckelaer had a hard time making a living during these difficult years. He was forced to collaborate in a subsidiary role with more successful masters like the court portraitist Anthonis Mor, for whom he painted costumes to earn a meager daily wage. It was only after his premature death in or about 1573 that conditions improved and his bountiful depictions of still-life dramatically increased in value. Today they are seen as impressive achievements of a progressive and challenging artistic personality.

Burr Wallen

The Toledo painting:

Collections: Brink-Merian family, Switzerland and Holland, from the nineteenth century to 1978.

General References:

Benesch, Otto. *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe*, London, 1965.

Cuttler, Charles D. *Northern Painting, from Pucelle to Bruegel*, New York, 1968.

Fisher, James. *A History of Birds*, Boston, 1954.

Foote, Timothy. *The World of Bruegel*, New York, 1968.

Grosjean, Ardis. "Toward an Interpretation of Pieter Aertsen's Profane Iconography," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, XLIII, 1974, pp. 121-43.

Lind, L.R., trans. *Aldrovandi on Chickens*, Norman, Oklahoma, 1963.

Moxey, Keith P.F. *Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, and the Rise of Secular Painting in the Context of the Reformation*, New York, 1977 (reprint of Ph.D.dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974).

_____. "The 'Humanist' Market Scenes of Joachim Beuckelaer: Moralizing Exempla or 'Slices of Life'?", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen*, 1976, pp. 109-88.

Osten, Gert von der, and Vey, Horst. *Painting and Sculpture in Germany and the Netherlands, 1500 to 1600*, Baltimore, 1969.

Figure 1. Hendrik van Vliet, *The Old Church in Delft with the Tomb of Piet Hein*, c. 1653-55. Oil on panel, 30 x 25 5/5 in. (76.2 x 65.1 cm.). The Toledo Museum of Art, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey. 76.63.

Hendrik van Vliet and the Delft School

In 1976 The Toledo Museum of Art acquired *The Old Church in Delft with the Tomb of Piet Hein* (fig. 1), a panel by the Dutch painter Hendrik van Vliet (1611/12-1675). Vliet (pronounced approximately "fleet") was a member of the Delft School during the 1650s and 60s, when Carel Fabritius, Pieter de Hoogh and Jan Vermeer painted there some of the finest Dutch pictures of the seventeenth century. Historians of Dutch art would promptly add the names of the prolific portraitist Michiel van Miereveld, the still life painters Evert and Willem van Aelst and Harmen and Pieter van Steenwyck, the genre painter Anthonie Palamedesz, and the history painter Leonaert Bramer to the list of artists that made Delft a leading, if late-blooming, center of Dutch art. Recently, the church interiors by Gerard Houckgeest and Emanuel de Witte have been given considerable attention as important examples of the empirical approach adopted by Delft painters in the early 1650s, an approach reflected in their faithful (or seemingly faithful) records of familiar streets, courtyards, and the rooms of lovingly tended homes, and in their attention to the essential visual qualities of light and space. The place of Vliet in this local development has, by contrast, been neglected, a circumstance that the painters mentioned above would have found surprising, and that the Toledo picture demonstrates is an undeserved fate.

History tends to be written differently than it is lived, in terms of people and events that changed its course rather than in those that simply maintained new directions. But artistic achievements were seen from another viewpoint by Vliet's contemporaries in Delft, where this native son, no doubt proud of the training he had received from his respected uncle, Willem van Vliet, and from the famous Mierevelt, must have been widely recognized as a good, modern painter, and from 1653 to his death in 1675 as one who enjoyed a virtual monopoly of producing the evidently popular portraits of Delft's two great Gothic churches. Vliet was the only living artist described in Dirck van Bleyswijck's windy *Description of the City of Delft* published in 1667, when Vermeer and Bramer were still active, where he is noted as a competent portraitist, as "not unlucky" in genre and history paintings, and as an artist who "understood perspective well, as may be seen in his modern (i.e. Gothic) or contemporary

temples, which, when he made them at his best, are very well foreshortened and illusionistic, as well as colored naturally" (p. 852).

The Old Church and New Church in Delft which Vliet painted so often were more than points of local interest; they were national monuments which enshrined the tombs of some of Holland's greatest heroes. The father of the Dutch Republic, William the Silent, lived in Delft and was assassinated there in 1584; his tomb by Hendrik de Keyser was erected in the choir of the New Church between 1616 and 1622 (fig. 2). William's sons, the Princes Maurice and Frederick Henry, and his grandson, William II, the stadholders of the Netherlands during the first half of the century, are also buried beneath this monument. All the earliest interior views of the Delft churches include either this tomb or that of the naval hero Admiral Piet Hein in the choir of the Old Church (figs. 1, 3-4). Hein's capture of a Spanish silver fleet in 1628 provided enough money to enable the Dutch to continue their struggle with Spain for control of the southern Netherlands. His tomb by Pieter de Keyser was erected after his death in 1629. Vliet often painted views that included the tomb of another naval hero, Admiral Maarten Tromp, after it was erected in the nearby Chapel of St. George in 1658. The popularity of these monuments was undoubtedly enhanced by the Treaty of Münster in 1648, which after eighty years' struggle for independence recognized the United Provinces as forever free of Spain. Paintings of the tomb of William were also a homage to the House of Orange, whose ruling member, the stadholder Prince William II, had died unexpectedly at the age of 24 on November 6, 1650, eight days before the birth of William III, the future stadholder and king of England.

Thus, church interiors painted in Delft were frequently—especially at first—expressions of national pride. They were also tributes to the churches themselves. As there are many paintings of these subjects besides those which show one of the tombs, pictures of church interiors in general must also have had religious significance (see Liedtke, "Faith in Perspective"). It was hardly inappropriate to combine this meaning with a patriotic one, for freedom of faith had been a passionate issue in the war of liberation, and to the citizens of Delft who actually worshipped in these churches, thoughts of God and country must have been intimately related.

The Delft specialty of portraits of local churches was initiated by Gerard Houckgeest with paintings dating 1650 and 1651 (e.g. figs. 2 and 3). In these almost photographically accurate views Houckgeest,

Figure 2. Gerard Houckgeest, *The New Church in Delft with the Tomb of William the Silent*, 1650. Hamburg, Kunsthalle.

Figure 3. Gerard Houckgeest, *The Old Church in Delft with the Tomb of Piet Hein*, c. 1650. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Figure 4. Photograph of the Old Church in Delft.

Figure 5. Hendrik van Vliet, *The Pieterskerk in Leiden*, 1652.
Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum.

who had painted imaginary church interiors for at least fifteen years, established a pattern for the subsequent career of Hendrik van Vliet and for the earliest church interiors by Emanuel de Witte. Vliet's contribution to architectural painting as a whole was not as important as the innovations of Houckgeest and de Witte, but in the long run he probably meant more than they did to painting in Delft. Houckgeest retired to the Zeeland shore by March 1652, and de Witte's move around 1653 to the booming art center of Amsterdam left Vliet alone to turn out what must have been hundreds of views that date from the next twenty years. Like Vermeer, Vliet was a local artist who responded in his early work to a wave of visitors from other, previously more advanced centers of painting; Houckgeest, de Witte, de Hoogh, Paulus Potter and Carel Fabritius were all outsiders, and except for de Hoogh they had all gone by the end of 1654.

Vermeer was certainly a far greater artist than Vliet, but Vliet, who was twenty years older, had painted some outstanding and progressive pictures (e.g. fig. 5) before Vermeer joined the painters' guild at the end of 1653. Vliet's responsiveness to fresh ideas and his anticipation, with Houckgeest and de Witte, of qualities only achieved by Vermeer and de Hoogh some five years later are strikingly evident in Toledo's new painting, a key work among Vliet's pictures in both historical significance and aesthetic quality (fig. 1). Its naturalistic daylight and illusionistic space, the close view of familiar surroundings, figures like the playing children and the couple at the left and, as discussed below, the picture's moral theme, raise the question of what the sudden prominence of this new subject meant to genre painters in Delft.

Vliet's earliest church interiors must date about 1651 (fig. 5 is his first dated example). In that year he was forty, had been in the guild for twenty years, and was evidently well established as a portraitist; this became a secondary interest after 1650. At the same time his now better-known colleague, Emanuel de Witte, was about thirty-five and had been a mediocre history painter since coming to Delft around 1640. Houckgeest was about fifty, and a resident of Delft since 1635. He had joined the guild at The Hague in 1625, and enjoyed a successful career during the thirties and forties as a specialist in architectural views. It was probably an important commission, perhaps for his finest surviving work, the unusually large panel at Hamburg dated 1650 (fig. 2; height 5 ft.), that converted Houckgeest to painting actual church interiors. In the closely related developments of all three painters around 1650-52 there is a marked increase in quality

over that of their earlier efforts, probably reflecting the importance in Dutch society of the subject, and its market value. To Houckgeest this brief period was the culmination of his active years (a wealthy marriage allowed his last decade to be leisurely), but for Vliet and de Witte it led to careers of real significance in Delft and Amsterdam.

Houckgeest painted what must have been the first view with Piet Hein's tomb (fig. 3, close in date and composition to fig. 2) from a vantage point just steps away from that of Vliet, who in the Toledo picture was strongly influenced by this example (fig. 1). Vliet often employed compositions by Houckgeest as a point of departure, but his style and his approach to the subject—especially his willingness to modify the architecture for artistic effect—are quite distinct. Houckgeest's version (fig. 3) is one of his most innovative designs, new in its exceptionally close vantage point, the resulting high and wide angles of view, and the interplay of rapid recessions, all devices which place the viewer within a space that appears to continue around him beyond the frame (see also fig. 2). The two-point perspective that structures the oblique recession of columns so frequently employed by the Delft painters was exceedingly rare before this, and was introduced by Houckgeest in response to viewing conditions at the actual site (fig. 4). The immediacy of space sensed by the viewer, with columns dominating the foreground and the floor spreading away in a natural, fluid manner, became a Delft hallmark that was cultivated by Vliet and de Witte.

About 1651 de Witte began making copies and variants after Houckgeest, but that year he also became a gifted painter of original compositions which increasingly emphasized light patterns as the essential means of describing space. Vliet never followed specific designs by Houckgeest during the early fifties as closely as did de Witte, for he promptly established his own versions of the new type (figs. 1 and 5). In these he achieved an illusion of space more conventional but also more striking than Houckgeest's or de Witte's. The former's illusionism is far more subordinate to the goal of fidelity, while the latter's play of light, shade and atmosphere is an optical approach very different than that represented by Vliet's clear voids and precisely textured surfaces. The feel of the stone is effectively complemented by Vliet's distinctive preference for cool colors, and the green curtain, slate floor and pale grays and creams of the walls suggest the chill of these great vaulted spaces rather than the warmth of their shafts of sunlight.

Vliet and de Witte were both figure painters in their early careers, and in their intimate views of Delft church interiors the figures are not just accessories, but often as significant as those in contemporary genre paintings. Genre painters of the 1650s, including de Hoogh and Vermeer, turned away from the Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Utrecht types of composition that focus on figures and make the setting quite subordinate, and began to place their figures in much more clearly articulated and naturally dominant interiors. One can follow this development in the work of de Hoogh and Vermeer around 1655-60, and while the examples of earlier genre painters certainly played a part, the achievement of the Delft architectural painters was also influential.

In this respect it is important to realize how significant figures can be in Dutch church interiors, especially in those by Vliet and de Witte. In the Toledo picture Vliet's figures evidently inspired the extensive rearrangement and simplification of the actual architecture. The curtain hides the illogical result in the vaults and keeps the viewer's eye at the populated level (more so than in fig. 5, where the faithful record of a great church in Leiden was of greater concern to Vliet). The nearest column in Houckgeest's view (figs. 3 and 4) should stand between Vliet's couple and dog (fig. 1), while the boys play in a second choir that is as wide as the main choir to the right. Two more columns should interrupt our view of the tomb, and while Vliet routinely stretched columns vertically, stressed depth in the foreground, and compressed the background toward the viewer "as if with a magnifying glass" (Jantzen), here these manipulations are exceptionally arbitrary, serving to enhance a commentary on life that begins on the left (fig. 6).

Contemporary essays chastising the behavior of people in church are recalled by Vliet's cavalier and young woman, as are contemporary genre scenes (fig. 7). Doffing the hat may seem more innocent than the monetary offer of ter Borch's visitor to a brothel, but both painters depict a man who would like to know the lady better in a biblical sense unrelated to being in church; and in both pictures the dog is a symbol of

Figure 6. Detail of figure 1.

Figure 7. Gerard ter Borch, "*The Parental Admonition*," c. 1654. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Figure 8. Gerard Houckgeest, *The Old Church in* Delft, 1651. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Figure 9. Pieter de Hoogh, *Courtyard, Delft,* c. 1657, The Toledo Museum of Art, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey. 49.27.

lust. Houckgeest may have been the first to paint such a couple in church (fig. 8), but ter Borch seems the likely source of Vliet's woman seen from behind. A recently discovered document dated April 22, 1653, and signed in Delft by ter Borch and Vermeer (see J.M. Montias in *Oud Holland*, 1977, p. 281) shows ter Borch was in Delft at this time, and Vliet's figure suggests that pictures by ter Borch were known locally.

Ter Borch was one of the first and most accomplished Dutch genre painters to study closely the manner in which people behave in society. Allowing the viewer to see the man's expression, but only the reticent pose of the woman he addresses, is just one of the subtle ways in which he conveys the play of feelings. In other respects, however, Vliet's handling of the subject is more conventional and obvious, and like his style of the 1650s, it is reminiscent of Leiden painters like Gerard Dou. Dou's moralizing themes, his illusionistic style and his use of a trompe l'oeil curtain to enhance the illusion of space all find a parallel in early church interiors by Vliet, and significantly one of these is of a Leiden church (fig. 5).

Whereas ter Borch's interior (fig. 7) could be that of a respectable home and his mirror and extinguished candle are understated reminders of mortality, in Vliet's painting the boys who play a game of chance and the preacher talking to a digger standing in an open grave (perhaps significantly, a "couple" of skulls have been unearthed) more pointedly bring to mind life's uncertainty and inevitable end. These motifs are more conspicuous versions of those Vliet admired in Houckgeest (fig. 3), and as in Houckgeest's picture, are meant to be contemplated in relation to their setting. Vliet's cavalier and woman are in the wrong place to find each other, but they might find themselves—and salvation—in the church itself.

The tomb of Piet Hein also serves as a *memento mori*, but it may have a more involved significance as both a mournful meditation on earthly fame, and as a commemoration of the patriot's virtue. The tomb of the naval hero may well have been intended as not only a reminder of death and of its democratic treatment of both great and ordinary men, but of a famous life lived with exemplary purpose.

While recent publications on Dutch genre themes and certain other subjects, such as the Amsterdam and Braunschweig exhibition catalogues cited below, have made us aware of these and of many other underlying meanings, the church interior has been little studied in this respect. An exterior view of the New Church is clearly contrasted to worldly concerns in Carel Fabritius's *View in Delft* (1652; National Gallery, London), and this suggests that the church tower frequently visible in the background of pictures by Metsu and Maes that represent, for example, a woman giving alms at her door is not just a skyline feature, but has religious significance (i.e., that charity is a Christian virtue). Thus, the tower of the Old Church itself relates to the domestic virtues praised by de Hoogh in his painting of about 1657 in the Toledo Museum (fig. 9).

Similarities in style between church and genre interiors painted in Delft have been described before, but, as suggested above, they might well be studied more carefully with a thought to Vliet's position in the local school. Lawrence Gowing, for example, has compared the illusionistic curtain and interior space of Vermeer's early *Letter Reader* in Dresden to the Old Church views of both Houckgeest and Vliet (figs. 1 and 8). Gowing's comparison of the "immobile and independent ladies of whom the *Letter Reader* is the first" to Vliet's column "standing alone in measured space and light" is a painter's view of painting that should not be lightly dismissed.

The sources of genre painting in Delft are complex and often date back many years, but the new interest in perspective applied to precisely defined architecture must have been partly stimulated by expert local talent. By 1655 Vliet would have been the leading specialist in town, and his work showed how to make the often difficult transition from real architectural space to a pictorial equivalent. The placement of figures within rather than in front of an interior space was not very successful in works by de Hoogh and Vermeer until the second half of the fifties. And unlike de Witte in his Delft period, Vliet often abandoned Houckgeest's restrictive two-point scheme for a one-point recession more applicable to domestic subjects. The Toledo picture (fig. 1) is a good example of this modification of a typical Houckgeest design (fig. 3), as it realigns the recession to a single vanishing point near the heads of the couple on the left so that the receding stones of

the floor focus the viewer's attention in their direction. The result is a corner of space quite like de Hoogh's (fig. 9), where the white wall, the patiently defined bricks and the diagonally receding broom recall similar examples in early works by Vliet.

By the mid-fifties Vliet turned more frequently to frontal recessions (e.g. fig. 10) which recall older architectural paintings but at the same time look forward to genre interiors later than the Toledo *Courtyard* (e.g. fig. 11). Finally, by 1658 Vliet began to increase considerably our apparent distance from the scene (examples in Baltimore, Schwerin, Vienna and elsewhere), which somewhat as in the imaginary church interiors of the older Antwerp tradition, arbitrarily established an ideal viewing point outside the church itself (fig. 12). This new, or rather revived approach was part of a general shift in taste from empirical to academic in-

Figure 10. Hendrik van Vliet, *The New Church in Delft*, c. 1656-58. Private Collection (formerly Alan Jacobs Gallery, London).

Figure 11. Pieter de Hoogh, *Card Players*, 1658. London, Buckingham Palace. Reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.

Figure 12. Hendrik van Vliet, *The Old Church in Delft*, 1662. Formerly Houthakker Gallery, Amsterdam.

terests, a development conspicuous in the art of Vermeer a few years after it appears in Vliet (fig. 13). The sweeping space Vermeer creates in a room of comparatively modest dimensions is no more realistic than Vliet's abrupt recession to Piet Hein's remotely visible tomb. One might find Vermeer's distance from the couple expressive, but Vliet's shift away from a more intimate experience (fig. 1) is more conventional, and more unequivocally a sign of decline. The less impressive pictures of his later years seem to reflect the increasingly uncertain market for pictures in the 1660s and 1670s.

Religious and domestic architecture were brought together in the thoughts of the people in Delft more often than they have been in modern histories of Dutch art. The church and the home were the only shelters familiar to local citizens as a daily experience. The tower seen from the town's streets and courtyards (fig. 9) marked the place where private values became those of the community.

Walter A. Liedtke

Figure 13. Jan Vermeer, *Lady and Gentleman at the Virginals ("The Music Lesson")*, probably c. 1664. London, Buckingham Palace. Reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen.

The Toledo painting:

Collections: Tethart Phillipp Christian Haag (1737-1812), The Hague; Sir Frederick Cook, Bt., Doughty House, Richmond, Surrey; Sir Herbert Cook; Sir Francis Cook; (Leonard Koetser, London); (Nijstad, The Hague).

References: Jantzen, Hans, *Das niederländische Architekturbild*, Leipzig, 1910, p. 103, no. 572, pl. 50.

General References

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, *Tot Lering en Vermaak*, 1976.

Blankert, Albert, *Vermeer of Delft*, Oxford, 1978.

Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, *Die Sprache der Bilder*, 1978.

Eisler, Max, *Alt-Delft, Kultur und Kunst*, Vienna, 1923.

Gowing, Lawrence, *Vermeer*, London, 1970.

Liedtke, Walter A., "Faith in Perspective," *Connoisseur*, 193, 1976, pp. 127-33.

The Toledo Museum of Art

OFFICERS

Samuel G. Carson, *President*
Edwin D. Dodd, *Vice President*
George P. MacNichol, Jr., *Vice President*
Otto Wittmann, *Vice President*
William W. Boeschenstein, *Secretary*
Robert G. Wingerter, *Treasurer*
Leonard C. Urbanski *Assistant Treasurer*
Roger Mandle, *Director*
Charles F. Gunther, *Assistant Director for Education*

TRUSTEES

John D. Anderson
Richard W. Bayer
Lawrence G. Bell, Jr.
Mrs. Harold Boeschenstein
William W. Boeschenstein
Samuel G. Carson
Chester Devenow
Edwin D. Dodd
Glen R. Driscoll
Robert A. Foster
Mrs. Joseph A. Gosman
Elmer A. Graham
George W. Haigh
Marvin S. Kobacker
Mrs. William E. Levis
Stanley K. Levison
Roger Mandle
George P. MacNichol, Jr.
Charles L. McKelvy, Jr.
William H. Price, II
Willard I. Webb, III
Ford R. Weber
Robert G. Wingerter
Otto Wittmann

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Edward H. Alexander
Curtis W. Davis
James C. Donnell, II
William J. Hitchcock
George M. Jones, Jr.
Jerome F. Kapp
Edward F. Knight
Dominick Labino
Harris McIntosh
Rene C. McPherson
Mrs. Peter R. Orser
Abe Plough
Roy Rike
David R. Rittenhouse
Duane Stranahan, Jr.
Robert A. Stranahan, Jr.
John H. Thomas
John P. Williamson

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Samuel G. Carson, *Chairman*
Lawrence G. Bell, Jr.
William W. Boeschenstein
Edwin D. Dodd
Stanley K. Levison
George P. MacNichol, Jr.
Robert G. Wingerter
Otto Wittmann

Ex-Officio:
Marvin S. Kobacker

ART COMMITTEE

Roger Mandle, *Chairman*
Samuel G. Carson
Marvin S. Kobacker
Otto Wittmann

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Samuel G. Carson, *Chairman*
Chester Devenow
Elmer A. Graham
Roger Mandle
Charles L. McKelvy, Jr.
Willard I. Webb, III
Robert G. Wingerter
Otto Wittmann
Leonard C. Urbanski, *Secretary*

ENDOWMENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Lawrence G. Bell, *Chairman*
John D. Anderson
Thomas Anderson
Richard W. Bayer
Charles P. Baither, Jr.
Mrs. A. Lewis Bentley, Jr.
Mrs. Fred Christen
Frederick D. Cohn
Joseph Crowley
Mrs. Patricia P. Dana
Mrs. Howard P. DeVilbiss
Wilbur M. Donaldson
Mrs. Thomas J. Fairhurst
Virgil A. Gladieux
Elmer A. Graham
Mrs. Elmer A. Graham
Clinton F. Hegg
Severn Joyce
Jerome F. Kapp
Richard Kaplin
Mrs. Newell E. Kaufman
Stanley K. Levison
Roland S. MacNichol
Arthur R. McCamey, Jr.
Robert F. Miller
David Morgan
Mrs. W. Boyd Owen
William H. Price II
John W. Pridgeon
Lawrence B. Raskin
Roy Rike
Elliott D. Sluhan
Carter Smith
Mrs. Carter Smith
William C. Turnbull
George Wade
Ford R. Weber
Hugh David White
Mrs. Frederic D. Wolfe
Carl E. Zerner
John A. Morse, *Endowment Coordinator*

Ex-Officio:
Samuel G. Carson
Marvin S. Kobacker
Roger Mandle
Otto Wittmann

ADMINISTRATION

Roger Mandle, *Director*
Mykk Gauger, *Secretary to the Director*
Tinka McArdle, *Public Relations Coordinator*
Sharon Ellard, *Clerk*
Joan Leiter, *File Clerk*

Leonard Urbanski, *Comptroller*
Kim Osborne, *Bookkeeper*
Janice Rutherford, *Bookkeeper*
John A. Morse, *Endowment Coordinator*
Donna Weddle, *Endowment Secretary*

Samuel F. Hunter, *Administrative Assistant*
Elizabeth S. Powers, *Secretary to Administrative Assistant*
Patricia Lark, *Supervisor, Mail Room*
Ellen Hudson, *Printer*
Judy Dye, *Switchboard Operator*
Barbara Broer, *Membership Coordinator*
Jane Bonner, *Membership Secretary*
Christine Rowand, *Bookstore Supervisor*

Dorothy Tomasik, *Art Supply Store Supervisor*
Natalie Tallon, *Registrar for Saturday and Adult Classes*

CURATORIAL DEPARTMENT

Robert F. Phillips, *Chief Curator and Curator of Contemporary Art*
Roger Berkowitz, *Curator of Decorative Arts*
William Hutton, *Senior Curator*
Kurt T. Luckner, *Curator of Ancient Art*
Roberta Waddell, *Curator of Prints*
Patricia J. Whitesides, *Registrar*
Norris Judd, *Kress Fellow in Prints*
Darlene Lindner, *Curatorial Secretary*
Sharon M. Stallkamp, *Curatorial Clerk*

SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Charles F. Gunther, *Assistant Director for Education*
Rose M. Glennon, *Supervisor of Gallery Tours*
Hollis Stauber, *Supervisor of Public Programs*
Jewel Hoogstoel, *Coordinator, Learning Museum Program*
Suzanne Marshall, *Assistant Coordinator, Learning Museum Program*
Richard Putney, *Coordinator of Art History Program*
David Guip, *Coordinator of Art Education Program*
Carolyn Papsidera, *Slide Librarian*
Miriam Blake, *School Secretary*
Mary Lou Miller, *University Secretary*
Barbara Lavender, *Secretary, Learning Museum Program*
Patricia Gurley, *Scheduling Secretary*
Duane Bastian, *Art Instructor*
Linda Bell, *Art Instructor*
Liz Cole, *Art Instructor*
Peter Elloian, *Art Instructor*
Rex Fogt, *Art Instructor*
Neil Frankenhauser, *Art Instructor*
Barry Ganoe, *Art Instructor*
Tom McGlauchlin, *Art Instructor*
Alan Melis, *Art Instructor*
Dorothy Smith, *Art Instructor*

LIBRARY

Anne O. Reese, *Librarian*
Joan Sepessy, *Assistant Librarian*
Nancy Burnard, *Library Clerk*

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Joyce Smar, *Supervisor of Music*
Annette Bevel, *Concert Secretary*
Michaelene Gorney, *Music Instructor*
Mary M. Thompson, *Music Instructor*

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Alan L. Gray, *Superintendent*
Harlan L. Horner, *Assistant Superintendent and Security Chief*
Diann Tohle, *Secretary*
Keith MacClintock, *Maintenance*
Terry Mulkey, *Maintenance Assistant*
Arthur B. Faulkner, *Maintenance Assistant*
David L. Cutcher, *Packer*
John D. Slusher, *Packer Assistant*
Richard O. Gurzynski, *Head Groundsman*
John J. Kozakiewicz, *Groundsman*
Clayborn Arnett, *Head Janitor*
Russell E. Allan, *Janitor*
Wayne V. Cutcher, *Janitor*
Kenneth Parrill, *Janitor*
Leon Coleman, Jr., *Janitor*
Robert Keiser, *Janitor*
Vito Chiaverini, *Head Guard*
Leonard D. Stewart, *Guard*
Eva J. Flemmings, *Guard*
Charles J. Wygant, *Guard*
Leonard W. Veil, *Guard*
Robert G. Friend, *Night Guard*
Leonard Narewski, *Night Guard*
Paul C. Benore, *Night Guard*
James H. Luman, *Night Guard*
Charles Biers, *Night Guard*

Otto Wittmann, *Director Emeritus and Consultant*
Dominick Labino, *Honorary Curator of Glass*

The Toledo Museum of Art
Box 1013, Toledo, Ohio 43697

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 86
Toledo, Ohio

[redacted]

M